

Today's News - Thursday, December 4, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to technical difficulties beyond our control, we were unable to post the news yesterday (oh - those pesky technology gods!). All's well now (we hope!).

- A young Spanish firm to design the 2015 Serpentine Pavilion: we won't know what it will look like for a few months, but it will be made of a single material.
- Capps minces no words about all the things that are so very wrong about the Guggenheim Helsinki gamble, including: "If design competitions are bad for designers, then this one was the worst there has ever been. It made a mockery of architecture."
- Wainwright checks in with all the things that are/could go wrong now the Garden Bridge over the Thames has been approved.
- Higgins checks in with Chipperfield re: some of the differences between London and Berlin: In Berlin, "there is still an idea of the public realm. We have given that up in London."
- Meanwhile, the Humboldt Forum project to rebuild a Prussian palace in Berlin is in trouble, lacking funds for its Baroque façade, it "could end up being nothing more than an unattractive concrete box besmirching the banks of the Spree."
- Saffron sees a few problems with a proposal to build a \$100 million velodrome in a historic Philly park: even with some nice perks proffered, "giving away public parkland to a private, for-profit venture would set a major precedent," and "sure to be a charged issue."
- Manchester, U.K. has high hopes for a new Ian Simpson and Mecanoo-designed arts center and cultural quarter as anchors of a major regeneration scheme.
- Perhaps all of the above should check out a new study that found "arts and culture have 'zero' impact on the economy."
- Wainwright reports on China's efforts to encourage urban artists to move to rural villages - but some are well ahead of the push and embracing "the roaring industry of domestic tourism" by capitalizing "on their picture-postcard charm."
- Also in China, the "beautiful ancient city of Yangzhou" taps the talent of a Texas team in hopes of reclaiming its "glorious and glamorous past."
- Davidson digs the "urban jungle" trend in cities "where patches of planned wilderness infiltrate the architecture, by invitation, not neglect."
- Hume hails Alsop's tabletop in Toronto: "At a time of fear-induced paralysis, the unabashed exuberance of the Sharp Centre is more irresistible than ever."
- Bentley cheers Beha's makeover of the University of Chicago's seminary building: "existing brick melds with brushed stainless steel, and new lighting dispels the moodiness of a religious retreat without entirely banishing a sense of the sublime."
- Rall rants against the apparent comeback of McMansions: "Garage mahals. Starter castles. Hummer houses. Biggification is a national trend" (his illustration is hilarious!).
- On a brighter note, our heartiest congrats to the winners of: Arch Record's Design Vanguard 2014 + B/D's Architect of the Year Awards 2014 + Curbed Young Guns Class of 2014 (eyefuls of everything!).
- Five cities join the UNESCO City of Design family.
- Taniguchi and Morrison take home the 2nd annual Isamu Noguchi Award.
- Call for entries: Wanted: a young firm to work with an artist on a major new £40,000 commission.

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SelgasCano to design 2015 Serpentine Pavilion: Spanish practice intend to use single material: The design will be revealed in February...will be the firm's first new structure in the UK. - BD/Building Design (UK)

Here Are the Top 6 Designs for the Guggenheim Helsinki, and They're All a Bad Idea: Finns are right to ask whether Helsinki needs the Guggenheim as much as the Guggenheim needs the harbor city: If design competitions are bad for designers, then this one was the worst there has ever been...The sum of the contest didn't celebrate the diversity of design. It made a mockery of architecture. By Kriston Capps - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Thames 'private' garden bridge could cost £3.5m a year in public money: The controversial scheme has been passed by Westminster Council, despite vociferous opposition on everything from crowd-crushing to lack of cycle routes and Londoners footing the bill...if TfL doesn't act as guarantor, the bridge won't get built. By Oliver Wainwright -- Thomas Heatherwick - Guardian (UK)

London's architecture lacks Berlin's sense of culture, says David Chipperfield: ...he regards private investment's hold over new architecture in London as an "absolutely terrible" means of building a city...In Berlin, "there is still an idea of the public realm. We have given that up in London." By Charlotte Higgins - Guardian (UK)

Emperor's New Clothes: Money Lacking for Facade of Berlin's New Palace: the new Prussian palace could end up being nothing more than an unattractive concrete box besmirching the banks of the Spree - and just as unsightly as the asbestos-ridden building controversially torn down to make room for it: The East German-era Palace of the Republic. -- Humboldt-Forum; Franco Stella [images]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Cyclists press plan for velodrome in S. Philadelphia: But to realize the \$100 million velodrome,...the city would have to give the organizers a four-acre parcel in ...historic FDR Park...While four acres in such a large park may not sound like a lot, giving away public parkland to a private, for-profit venture would set a major precedent...The transfer is sure to be a charged issue. By Inga Saffron -- Sheward Partnership [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Manchester's new arts centre and cultural quarter given green light: ...will anchor a major regeneration scheme that will transform Manchester's southern gateway..."it won't be long before the new centre starts making an enormous contribution to the cultural scene in Manchester, the North West and the UK as a whole." -- Ian Simpson Architects; Mecanoo [image]- Manchester Evening News (UK)

Arts and culture have "zero" impact on the economy claims new report: ...while cultural events offer "intrinsic value to people aside from economic benefits," anticipated financial rewards are seldom realised...the proximity of sports grounds, theatres, arts centres and other facilities "are likely to have a positive impact on very local prices"...policymakers should see them as "part of a broader strategy rather than as stand-alone projects". -- What Works Network- The Stage (UK)

'Our cities are insufferable': China's president Xi Jinping thinks the country's artists should move to village communities. But some are well ahead of him -- and transforming country life...have capitalised on their picture-postcard charm and embraced the roaring industry of domestic tourism...The next phase of the Bishan project will see another ancestral hall converted into a museum and events space for the village... By Oliver Wainwright in Bishan, Anhui- Guardian (UK)

Reclaiming a piece of history: The beautiful ancient city of Yangzhou has a glorious and glamorous past, but the storied heart of it has fallen to neglect. The mayor asked a team from Texas to help to turn it around... -- Overland Partners; Arup- China Daily

Going Green in the Urban Jungle: New York of a couple of decades from now could be greener by design, a city where patches of planned wilderness infiltrate the architecture, by invitation, not neglect... Greening the city is not just a New York effort. By Justin Davidson -- Amale Andraos/Dan Wood/WORKac/Work Architecture Company; Diana Balmori; Weiss/Manfredi; Mia Lehrer; Trust for Public Land; Stefano Boeri- New York Magazine

Will Alsop's tabletop takes flight: Once controversial, the appeal of Toronto's most unusual building has only grown. And now, the rest of the school will get a makeover: At a time of fear-induced paralysis, the unabashed exuberance of the Sharp Centre is more irresistible than ever. By Christopher Hume -- Bartolotto Architects- Toronto Star

Holy Books: Economics students take over a university seminary at the University of Chicago: ...existing brick melds with brushed stainless steel, and new lighting dispels the moodiness of a religious retreat without entirely banishing a sense of the sublime. By Chris Bentley -- Ann Beha Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

What McMansions say about Americans: Stupid is as stupid does: Big doesn't have to mean ugly...But it usually does...real estate developers are bringing back McMansions - gargantuan monstrosities...Garage mahals. Starter castles. Hummer houses...Biggification is a national trend. By Ted Rall [image]- Los Angeles Times

Design Vanguard 2014: Presenting 15th annual list of 10 emerging firms championing new approaches to design and practice. -- NAMELESS Architecture; Barozzi / Veiga; ESKYIU; Merge Architects; UID; Andrés Jaque/Office for Political Innovation; Go Hasegawa; Aranda\Lasch; Go Hasegawa; Vector Architects; Studio Ma [images]- Architectural Record

Architect of the Year Awards 2014: ...comes at the end of a year of growing workloads and increasing optimism. -- Haworth Tompkins; Langarita-Navarro Arquitectos; Ian Simpson Architects; Hewitt Studios; Arup Associates; McDowell & Benedetti; Allies & Morrison; Spacelab; Piercy & Company; Flanagan Lawrence; dRMM- BD/Building Design (UK)

The Curbed Young Guns Class of 2014: ...a diverse a suite of community builders, multitaskers, traditionalists, and neighborhood revivalists. -- Nick Gelpi/Gelpi Projects; Denise Cherry/Studio O+A; Justin Rice/Kagan Taylor,/Knowhow Shop; Hunter Leggitt Studio; Molly Meyer/Omni Ecosystems; Katie MacDonald/Kyle Schumann/After Architecture; Elizabeth Timme/LA-Más; Lindsey Scannapieco/Scout; Adam Jordan/Bates-Masi Architects; Matthew Holdren Design- Curbed

Five cities awarded UNESCO City of Design status: Dundee, Bilbao, Curitiba, Helsinki and Turin...for their input to the international design industry...cities must meet criteria...that includes having a thriving design industry fed by design schools and research centres, and practising groups of creators and designers.- Dezeen

Jasper Morrison and Yoshio Taniguchi Awarded Second Isamu Noguchi Award: ...given to professionals who, like Noguchi, are leaders in the fields of design and architecture, and "kindred spirits in innovation, global consciousness, and Japanese/American exchange"...- The Architect's Newspaper

Call for entries: Wanted: a young architecture practice to work with an artist on a major new £40,000 commission (international); practice must be no more than 5 years old with staff of no more than 10 architects; deadline: January 14, 2015- Blueprint / Ryder Architecture / BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

-- Oikios Architekten: InterContinental Hotel, Davos, Switzerland: ...a striking landmark. Like a giant, shimmering pinecone amidst snow-clad pine trees of the Swiss Alps. By Ulf Meyer
-- What's New on the Bookshelves? ...beautiful monographs on Aalto and the Eames couple to an insightful issue of CLOG dedicated to Rem Koolhaas...
-- Marina_Morón: Their work explores tangible connections between the image and architectonic space...
-- 7 Modern Religious Buildings -- O Studio Architects; Atelier Peter Zumthor; Roseta Vaz Monteiro Arquitectos; Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor; Álvaro Siza; JKMM Architects; Richard Meier & Partners

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